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European Council | Statements and remarks | 29 June 2015 19:45

Remarks by President Donald Tusk at the press conference of the EU-China summit

We have just concluded our plenary session of the summit between China and the European Union. It is the 17th summit between us but it was the first one for President Juncker and myself. It is a pleasure to receive Premier Li, who has travelled to Brussels for the first time as leader. It is also a sign of our strengthening relationship that we are able to stand here together in what I believe is the first joint press conference after an EU-China summit in Brussels.

China is one of the European Union's most important partners. This year we are celebrating the 40th anniversary of our bilateral relations. So today was a good moment to look at what we achieved so far, and, more importantly, to think about what more we can do now and in the future.

Today, we decided to reinforce our EU-China 2020 Strategic Agenda, which frames our relationship. We have also agreed with Premier Li the priorities for the up-coming year. This is an impressive list. It ranges from trade and investment to human rights and migration; from security and defence to climate change and development. And beyond. On many of these issues, we have moved forward today. Because we share strategic interests. But also because of our commitment to address global challenges together.

We support China's ambitious reform process and have no doubt that it will be a success. We also discussed how we could further improve cooperation on human rights at the bilateral and international level. I expressed our concerns on freedom of expression and association in China, including the situation of the persons belonging to minorities such as Tibetans and Uighurs. In that context, I have encouraged China to resume a meaningful dialogue with the Dalai Lama's representatives.

Finally, I am glad we could agree that the next round of our human rights dialogue and the second visit of the EU Special Representative for Human Rights to China will both take place, separately, in November this year.

Our agenda also includes global challenges, which we need to face together, such as climate change and development. We discussed how to promote low carbon and climate-friendly investments bilaterally and internationally. We agreed to aim for a fair and ambitious deal at the climate conference in Paris in December. One shared goal should be to keep global average temperature increases below 2 degrees Celsius compared to pre-industrial levels.

We will discuss foreign policy over the working dinner and the acute crises in Syria, Libya and Yemen as well as the situation in Iraq. The agenda also includes Iran.

Another focus will be our respective neighbourhoods, in particular Ukraine. It is important to re-assert that the conflict in the eastern part of Ukraine can only be solved by peaceful means and through full respect for international law, especially for Ukraine's sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence. A stable and prosperous Ukraine is both in the interest of China and the European Union. We are both committed to assist its reforms and development.

The 70th year since the end of World War II is a moment to reflect on our shared duty to promote reconciliation and cooperation in our respective regions. My message is that dialogue, respect for international law and effective crisis management mechanisms are needed for the Asia-Pacific to enjoy the peace, security and prosperity that everybody hopes it will. States should pursue the settlement of maritime disputes in accordance with international law, notably the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

When it comes to Greece, I have just one comment to make. Every government has a right to hold a referendum therefore we respect the Greek decision and it is not my role to interfere in Greek domestic politics. However one thing should be very clear. If someone says that the government will have a stronger negotiating position with the NO vote, it is simply not true. I am afraid that with such a result of the referendum there will be even less space for negotiations.

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Last review: 14 January 2024